

# CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

WALTER M. DICKIE, M.D., Director

## Weekly



## Bulletin

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University of California

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GUY P. JONES  
EDITOR

## Regulation of Food Sales



Dr. Alex M. Lesem, Director of Health for San Diego and San Diego County, has established a method of control over food sales, as conducted by various organizations and societies in San Diego County. Such control is important in the prevention of food poisoning, which occurs quite commonly when foods prepared from a wide variety of sources are placed on sale. The method of control is explained by Dr. Lesem in the following communication, which has been sent to the communities under his jurisdiction:

"It appears that the activities for raising money for church societies are limited and it has been the practice to conduct food sales for the purpose of producing revenue. On several occasions these gatherings have resulted in cases of food poisoning. It seems reasonable to restrict the activities to the preparation of only such foods as may be safe for human consumption and the Health Department should establish a very definite policy that should be adhered to in the conduct of these sales. I am sure that various organizations will be willing to cooperate with this office in preventing any outbreak of food poisoning as has occurred previously. Since it is not possible for them to comply in every detail with the food handling ordinance, it becomes necessary to restrict the activities in certain types of foods.

"A permit may be issued to the organization for the sale of cakes, cookies, and doughnuts. These should be prepared in clean houses and clean kitchens. Wherever any communicable disease or infectious disease is in the home, that family must be barred from participating in the preparation of any food. There

are additional regulations concerning the sale and distribution of cream filled pastries such as chocolate eclairs, cream pies, cream puffs and any other pastries with cream filling. Since these cannot be complied with they would be barred from any food sale. The public sale of meats, salads, or other food is prohibited excepting under strict regulation. Special emphasis should be placed on the prohibiting of the sale of home canned fruits, pickles, jellies, etc., and all of this type of food which is not put up in licensed plants under state or county supervision. The same applies to homemade pickles, olives, etc. All cakes, cookies and doughnuts placed for public sale must be wrapped in cellophane or clean waxed paper which has not been previously used, or placed in clean paper cartons which have not been used formerly.

"This ruling does not affect lodge and church suppers where food is brought to the premises for preparation. Application for these food sales should be made in advance so that if there is any question about the premises where the preparation of food occurs, our inspectors should be privileged to make an inspection of the same. It is the desire of this department to cooperate as far as possible without permitting direct violations of the food laws both of the state and the county.

"I trust that we may have the cooperation of all concerned.

Yours very truly,  
ALEX M. LESEM, M.D.,  
Director of Health."

A healthy mind in a healthy body.—Juvenal.

### AN HISTORICAL OUTBREAK OF FOOD POISONING

The most extensive outbreak of food infection due to the *bacillus enteritidis* of Gärtner ever reported in this country occurred at Mare Island Navy Yard, California, thirty years ago, December 5, 1908, following the launching of the U. S. collier Prometheus. A large number of individuals attended the launching, which was made a festive affair.

The food was prepared in San Francisco by a San Francisco caterer, and was shipped to Mare Island. It consisted of shrimp and chicken salad; beef, tongue, and chicken sandwiches; cold turkey, tongue, and roast beef; cheese and coffee. This menu was served to 2,500 people, nearly 1,000 of whom became sick at the same time, and with the same train of symptoms, twenty-four hours after eating lunch.

By process of elimination, it was found that the meat sandwiches were the probable cause of the outbreak. Those who ate salad and cold meat were not taken ill, but all who ate sandwiches were sick. An investigation, undertaken by Dr. James J. Hogan of Vallejo, revealed the presence of the *bacillus enteritidis* of Gärtner. It was established that the meat in these sandwiches was infected, and that they were responsible for the 1,000 cases of illness.

Similar outbreaks have occurred in England, Germany, Belgium, and Holland, but this Navy Yard outbreak in California thirty years ago is the most extensive outbreak of its sort that has ever been recorded. The *bacillus enteritidis* of Gärtner belongs to the Salmonella group, which is closely related to paratyphoid organisms. In fact, the Salmonella group is often called the paratyphoid group.

Gärtner's bacillus was discovered in 1888, and provided the first exact evidence that incriminated bacteria is a definite factor in the production of food poisoning. Outbreaks, due to this organism, are not of frequent occurrence at the present time, but they occur occasionally.

### NEW HEALTH OFFICERS

Dr. Dwight M. Bissell has been appointed Health Officer of Monterey County. Dr. Roy M. Fortier, who has held this position for many years, has taken a leave of absence for one year because of illness. Dr. Bissell maintains his office at the County Hospital, Salinas.

Dr. Bryson E. Cox has been appointed City Health Officer of Coalinga for 1939.

A sound mind in a sound body, is a short but full description of a happy state in this world.—Locke.

### AN UNUSUAL CAUSE OF FOOD POISONING

In the summer of 1931, an unusual outbreak of food poisoning, due to Jimson weed, occurred in an interior county of the state. About thirty minutes after eating their dinner at a ranch house, 14 out of 21 farm laborers were taken suddenly ill. Due to weakness in the legs, they collapsed immediately. There was dryness of the throat, thickness of the tongue, dizziness, blindness, dilated pupils, rapid pulse, delirium, incoherent muttering, picking at the bed clothes and retention of urine. There was no temperature, nausea, vomiting, nor diarrhea.

The symptoms at first seemed to be those of botulism, but an investigation, undertaken by Dr. John J. Sippy and the State Department of Public Health, revealed the fact that Jimson weed had accidentally been cooked together with the spinach which had been served to the ranch laborers. This weed was growing wild in the garden with the spinach, and in gathering the vegetable, both had been included in the greens which the laborers consumed.

The active symptoms were due to the powerful alkaloids that are found in Jimson weed, chiefly stramonium and atropine. It is stated that cattle will not eat Jimson weed. This outbreak of accidental food poisoning was due solely to the powerful alkaloids in Jimson weed, which, through accident, was cooked with spinach.

### DR. MILLS HEADS CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Dr. C. Martin Mills has been appointed Chief of the Crippled Children's Services of the California State Department of Public Health. He will have charge of all activities under the California Crippled Child Act and those for the relief of the physically handicapped made possible through the provision of Social Security funds. Dr. Mills is trained in public health, having received his Certificate in Public Health at the University of California.

### GENERAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Increases during November are noted in the incidence of chickenpox, German measles and measles. The incidence of malaria remains high. So far this year, 333 cases of malaria were reported, as compared with an average of from 170 to 190 cases reported annually during each of the past four years. The increase in 1938 is due to cases and carriers among migrants, who have entered California from states where malaria is prevalent.

## PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING CONFERENCES

Plans for a series of conferences on prenatal care are being completed by the Public Health Nursing Service of the California State Department of Public Health. The following dates have been definitely set:

San Jose	Thursday, January 19
Ukiah	Saturday, January 21
Redding	Monday, January 23
Sacramento	Wednesday, January 25
San Francisco	Friday, January 27
Santa Barbara	Tuesday, January 31
Santa Ana	Tuesday, February 7
Bakersfield	Thursday, February 9
Fresno	Saturday, February 11

Tentative dates which have not yet been verified are:

San Diego	February 2
Los Angeles	February 4

An obstetrician will speak at each morning session. In the afternoon, Miss Mary B. Willeford, who came to the Department December 1st as Public Health Nursing Consultant in Maternal and Child Health will discuss the functions of the public health nurse in the prenatal program.

## FOOD POISONING

An outbreak of food poisoning occurred recently in a college, about 207 individuals having been involved. The symptoms were typical of food poisoning, but no definite source of infection was found. Recovery occurred in all cases from 24 to 36 hours after onset.

An investigation was made into the deaths of 17 cats and 40 chickens in a pet shop. Botulism was at first suspected, but the symptoms in the animals involved were not those of botulism. Several food products were under suspicion, but nothing of either chemical or bacterial nature was found in portions left over or from similar products submitted for examination. No human cases were involved.

## SEPTIC SORE THROAT

Twenty-four cases of epidemic septic sore throat, with two deaths, were investigated in a southern county. All cases occurred on a raw milk dairy route. It was found that an individual, suffering from the disease, had worked on the dairy a few days before the onset of symptoms in consumers of the milk.

## TYPHOID FEVER

A group of five cases was investigated recently in an interior county with the determination that three had a common source of infection. No definite source was found in any of the cases investigated.

Eight cases in another county were investigated, five of which were in transients. All were widely distributed with no common source of infection.

A case of typhoid occurred in an eight year old child, and an investigation revealed the source as due to contact with a chronic carrier, who had been employed in the family as a cook, and who had had typhoid fever in 1931 while living in another state.

## SUMMER SESSION COURSE ON VENEREAL DISEASE NURSING

The course in venereal disease nursing which is to be offered at the University of California in Berkeley during the Summer Session will cover a period of three weeks from June 16 to July 14. Medical lectures will be given by members of the staff of the Bureau of Venereal Diseases from eleven to twelve. Mrs. Evangeline Morris will teach the course in medical and social aspects in the control of syphilis and gonorrhea from one to three in the afternoon. The fee for the course is \$17.50. Three units of credit will be given.

## BOTULISM

Three cases of typical botulism, with one death, were investigated. Samples of the actual food eaten were not available for laboratory examination. The cases were probably due to the use of home-canned fish.

## PSITTACOSIS CONTROL

In Southern California, 65 shell parakeet aviaries were inspected and 314 interstate shipments were checked and approved. These shipments involved 4634 shell parakeets and 350 larger psittacine birds.

## RELAPSING FEVER

Two cases of relapsing fever were reported during November. Both were contracted in the high mountains during the late summer. Diagnosis in each case was confirmed by laboratory findings.

Health is so necessary to all the duties, as well as pleasures of life, that the crime of squandering it is equally to the folly.—Johnson.

## MORBIDITY

## Complete Reports for Following Diseases for Week Ending December 24, 1938.

## Chickenpox

464 cases: Alameda County 11, Alameda 1, Berkeley 2, Oakland 26, Piedmont 4, San Leandro 2, Contra Costa County 13, Concord 2, Pittsburg 1, Fresno County 10, Fresno 3, Imperial County 1, El Centro 2, Kern County 10, Bakersfield 1, Kings County 2, Hanford 1, Los Angeles County 38, Alhambra 5, Arcadia 2, Burbank 2, Glendale 1, Long Beach 6, Los Angeles 41, Monrovia 2, Pasadena 3, San Fernando 1, San Marino 1, Santa Monica 6, South Pasadena 2, Lynwood 1, Hawthorne 1, South Gate 2, Gardena 2, Madera County 2, Madera 1, San Anselmo 2, Los Banos 12, Atwater 1, Monterey County 1, King City 1, Salinas 4, Orange County 3, Newport Beach 4, Santa Ana 9, Sacramento 16, San Bernardino County 9, Ontario 6, San Bernardino 1, San Diego County 4, Escondido 1, San Diego 20, San Francisco 45, San Joaquin County 5, Stockton 14, Tracy 2, Paso Robles 2, San Mateo County 4, Burlingame 19, San Mateo 26, Santa Barbara County 1, Santa Barbara 1, Santa Maria 1, Santa Clara County 3, Gilroy 1, Palo Alto 7, San Jose 2, Santa Clara 2, Santa Cruz 1, Siskiyou County 1, Solano County 2, Sonoma County 5, Tulare County 1, Dinuba 2, Exeter 1, Tulare 1, Ventura County 1, Fillmore 3, Santa Paula 3, Ventura 1, Yuba County 2.

## Diphtheria

47 cases: Oakland 3, Fresno 1, Kern County 4, Los Angeles County 2, Alhambra 2, Los Angeles 17, Hawthorne 1, South Gate 1, Monterey Park 1, Monterey County 1, San Bernardino County 3, San Diego 3, San Francisco 2, San Mateo County 1, Santa Clara County 1, Shasta County 4.

## German Measles

13 cases: Alameda 1, Albany 1, Berkeley 2, Los Angeles County 1, Burbank 1, Long Beach 2, Orange 1, San Diego County 1, San Diego 1, San Joaquin County 1, Santa Paula 1.

## Influenza

46 cases: Fresno County 23, Los Angeles County 2, Huntington Park 3, Inglewood 1, Los Angeles 7, San Gabriel 1, Maywood 1, Santa Ana 2, Placentia 3, San Bernardino County 1, San Francisco 1, Siskiyou County 1.

## Malaria

2 cases: Tulare County 1, California 1.\*

## Measles

759 cases: Alameda County 2, Alameda 9, Berkeley 8, Oakland 90, San Leandro 2, Chico 1, Calaveras County 3, Contra Costa County 4, Concord 6, Richmond 1, Fresno County 7, Imperial County 1, Burbank 1, Long Beach 7, Los Angeles 7, Monrovia 1, Madera County 3, Marin County 11, San Anselmo 7, San Rafael 2, Napa 1, Anaheim 1, Riverside County 3, Riverside 1, Sacramento 2, San Bernardino County 2, Colton 1, San Bernardino 5, National City 2, San Diego 21, San Francisco 405, San Joaquin County 4, Manteca 1, Stockton 9, San Mateo County 3, Burlingame 3, Daly City 4, San Bruno 3, San Mateo 1, San Carlos 4, Santa Clara County 16, Los Gatos 1, Palo Alto 5, San Jose 39, Santa Clara 5, Santa Cruz 1, Siskiyou County 3, Stanislaus County 9, Tehama County 5, Red Bluff 24, Exeter 1, Ventura 1.

## Mumps

449 cases: Alameda County 9, Alameda 6, Albany 34, Berkeley 83, Oakland 48, Piedmont 2, San Leandro 5, Contra Costa County 17, Pittsburg 2, Richmond 7, Walnut Creek 4, Fresno County 1, Orland 6, Kern County 6, Bakersfield 1, Hanford 2, Los Angeles County 4, Glendale 1, Long Beach 3, Los Angeles 23, Monrovia 2, Montebello 1, Pasadena 3, Pomona 2, Santa Monica 2, South Gate 1, San Anselmo 1, Mendocino County 18, Los Banos 3, Atwater 1, Mono County 1, Monterey County 2, Napa 1, Santa Ana 1, Laguna Beach 1, Beaumont 1, Riverside 13, Sacramento 20, San Bernardino County 2, Ontario 10, San Bernardino 1, San Diego County 13, San Diego 11, San Francisco 16, San Joaquin County 9, Stockton 6, San Mateo County 1, San Bruno 1, Belmont 1, San Jose 2, Santa Cruz County 3, Solano County 1, Vallejo 2, Stanislaus County 1, Modesto 1, Trinity County 1, Tulare County 3, Dinuba 5, Exeter 21.

## Pneumonia (Lobar)

73 cases: Berkeley 1, Oakland 5, San Leandro 1, Colusa 1, Los Angeles County 11, Compton 1, Glendale 2, Los Angeles 18, Pasadena 2, Pomona 1, Torrance 1, Maywood 1, Santa Ana 2, Sacramento County 1, Sacramento 3, San Diego 1, San Francisco 15, Shasta County 2, Oxnard 1, Ventura 1, Yuba County 2.

## Scarlet Fever

223 cases: Alameda County 2, Oakland 7, Chico 6, Contra Costa County 2, Fresno County 20, Fresno 1, Imperial County 1, Kern County 2, Kings County 1, Los Angeles County 25, Burbank 1, Compton 1, Culver City 1, Inglewood 2, Long Beach 5, Los

\*Cases charged to "California" represent patients ill before entering the State or those who contracted their illness traveling about the State throughout the incubation period of the disease. These cases are not chargeable to any one locality.

Angels 55, Pasadena 2, Pomona 1, Redondo 1, Santa Monica 4, Sierra Madre 2, Torrance 3, Lynwood 1, Maywood 1, Orange County 1, Orange 2, Santa Ana 3, Riverside County 1, Beaumont 1, Elsinore 1, Riverside 1, Indio 1, Sacramento County 2, North Sacramento 1, Chino 1, Ontario 2, National City 1, San Diego 1, San Francisco 12, San Joaquin County 8, Stockton 7, San Luis Obispo County 1, Santa Barbara County 1, Santa Barbara 3, Santa Maria 1, Santa Clara County 2, San Jose 2, Shasta County 1, Solano County 4, Stanislaus County 2, Modesto 1, Yuba City 1, Red Bluff 3, Tulare County 1, Dinuba 1, Lindsay 2, Winters 4.

## Smallpox

13 cases: Long Beach 4, San Gabriel 5, Sacramento 4.

## Typhoid Fever

5 cases: Hanford 1, Madera County 1, Stockton 1, Tulare County 2.

## Whooping Cough

110 cases: Alameda County 1, Berkeley 1, Oakland 3, Richmond 1, Tehachapi 1, Los Angeles County 3, Glendale 1, Inglewood 2, Los Angeles 7, Pasadena 14, Redondo 1, Whittier 1, South Gate 1, Madera County 1, San Rafael 1, Mono County 2, Monterey County 1, Orange County 3, Fullerton 1, Santa Ana 1, San Diego County 2, Oceanside 5, San Diego 9, San Francisco 14, San Joaquin County 2, Stockton 1, Lompoc 11, Santa Barbara 2, San Jose 1, Ventura County 2, Oxnard 4, Ventura 1, Yuba County 9.

## Meningitis (Epidemic)

One case: Los Angeles.

## Dysentery (Bacillary)

13 cases: Fresno County 1, Los Angeles County 1, Los Angeles 1, Santa Ana 1, San Luis Obispo County 4, San Luis Obispo 2, Sonoma County 2, Santa Rosa 1.

## Pellagra

One case: Los Angeles County.

## Poliomyelitis

One case: Oakland.

## Trachoma

2 cases: Indio.

## Encephalitis (Epidemic)

One case: Solano County.

## Trichinosis

2 cases: Sonoma County.

## Typhus Fever

3 cases: Los Angeles.

## Food Poisoning

12 cases: Kern County 8, Los Angeles County 2, San Jose 2.

## Undulant Fever

8 cases: Chico 1, Los Angeles 1, Monrovia 1, Pasadena 1, Pomona 1, Riverside County 1, Ontario 1, California 1.\*

## Coccidioidal Granuloma

3 cases: Delano 1, Sacramento 1, San Luis Obispo County 1.

## Septic Sore Throat

2 cases: Hanford 1, Long Beach 1.

## Rabies (Animal)

40 cases: Imperial County 1, Kern County 1, Bakersfield 2, Los Angeles County 2, Alhambra 1, Compton 3, Los Angeles 9, San Gabriel 1, Hawthorne 1, Monterey Park 1, Monterey County 1, San Diego 1, San Joaquin County 1, San Mateo County 1, Redwood City 1, Santa Clara County 8, Gilroy 1, Santa Clara 1, Sunnyvale 2, Ceres 1.

You can not stop contagious disease with a law, a health officer, and a placard. You must get cooperation of the people by education, by persuasion and by organization.

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